

## Forces

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# Shopping

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## SHOPPING

Betsy Giron

**MARIA YANKED TWICE AT THE SHOPPING CART** to free it from its captive ranks. "I don't think he suspected anything. He couldn't have," she mumbled. She pulled her list from her knock-off Coach purse and tucked the loose L'Oreal #52 strand of hair behind her ear. "Bread, mayonnaise, margarine, frozen pizza, Kibbles-n-Bits... He did give me a strange look while drinking his coffee, though." Maria rolled the cart forward with some degree of difficulty. It had a bad wheel and pulled her to the right. The smell of fresh baked bread was the direction she maneuvered it towards. "What if he looked at my phone? I had it locked, I thought. Or what if he followed me to the pharmacy?" Lost in what-ifs, Maria started squeezing fresh bread loaves. At the third loaf, she gasped and squeezed a little too hard. "I think I left that receipt in my coat pocket." Maria remembered her bronze colored, faux fur coat that she wore to the Friday night show with her husband. During the movie she had a chill and put her hands in the pockets. She vaguely remembered feeling papers in one of them. That was the same coat she wore with him on the Wednesday afternoon before movie night.

As Maria labored through the butcher block, despising the sight of raw slabs of beef and the smell of crab legs, she thought of her husband's subtle accusations while he stabbed his Bisquick pancakes that morning. "He asked me what I was doing today. He's never cared about that before," she said, grabbing a package of butcher's bones for Grunt. The butcher yelled out, "Hey Maria, how's it cookin'?" and winked at her as she passed. Maria smiled her Crest Advanced White smile and continued on to the condiments. Her pace was at a walk, walk, pull as she shifted the turning cart every few steps. "I had better think of a reason for the receipt. Surely, he will question me tonight." Maria picked out the expensive Best Foods mayonnaise at first, by mistake, then she replaced it with the 'buy one get one free' store brand. "I better make his favorite dinner tonight, maybe the roast and potatoes that he always wants on football Sundays. Of course, then he might suspect something anyway since it's Tuesday."

Maria hefted the thirty pound bag of Kibbles-n-Bits into the cart, not noticing that it was the liver flavor instead of the beef. Now the cart was too hard to push and she had to go around to the front of it and pull. This was not easy to do either in shiny, black, three inch heels. The chill of the frozen pizza section escaped into her body. There it stayed as she stood in the checkout line. Giving in to the power of suggestive selling, she grabbed a Milky Way bar and threw it in the cart. A little satisfaction from shopping wouldn't hurt, she defended.

The digital beep, beep of the scanners felt like the seconds ticking down to a bomb's explosion. Her thoughts accelerated with her heart beats as she prepared to face him. Then, suddenly her phone rang... it was him.

they sighed her wonder they breathed her praise . . .